

## **Roger Brooke Taney to Andrew Jackson, January 1, 1845, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>CHIEF JUSTICE TANEY TO JACKSON.

Washington, January 1, 1845.

My Dear sir, I am glad to have it in my power to write to you from Washington on New Years day, and to offer you my warm congratulations on its return, and to wish you according to our good old Maryland custom a happy New Year and many returns of it. The day never passes without my thinking of you, and your many kindnesses to me and they have all come more strongly to my recollection today, for I have been at the Presidents mansion where I have so often seen you, and in the room where I was accustomed to find you; and perhaps I 0378 354 looked at them with the more pleasure because I know they are soon to be occupied by one of your most firm and faithful friends. And this evening Major Lewis called to see me, and as we always when we meet talk about you, he took the liberty of showing me a confidential letter he had recently received from you, which I was rejoiced to see and to read.

You know that since I have been on the Bench I have abstained from taking part in political movements; but the sincere regard I entertain for Mr. Polk and the trying times through which he and I passed together, made it more difficult for me to remain quiet when he and Mr. Clay were the opposing candidates. And now that Mr. Polk has been so triumphantly elected, I feel the more anxious for the success of his administration, because I see the difficulties which will beset him the moment he enters upon the duties of the high office to which he has been chosen. I had hoped that Mr Calhoun would both for his own sake and Mr. Polks have seen the propriety of his retiring from office with the close of the present

## Library of Congress

administration. But I fear this will not be the case from what I have heard since I came here. You always said that with all his talents, he had no judgment, and I am every day more and more convinced of the correctness of your opinion. If Mr. Calhoun consulted his own interest he would insist upon retiring. And if he does not—and I fear he will not—Mr. Polk's first act will require some firmness, for he will be obliged to insist upon it, or his own administration will be a failure. There is but one course that can give to Mr. Polk the confidence of the public and insure success to his administration, and that is not to have any one in his cabinet who is supposed to be a candidate for the succession. If he takes a different course and retains Mr. Calhoun, the administration in less than twelve months will find itself in a minority of its own party. It will be assailed on every side, and overwhelmed. Mr. Calhoun has no right to object to this course or to consider it as unfriendly to him. The principle on which he should be excluded from the cabinet is a plain and just one and will be sanctioned by the public judgment; and if Mr. Calhoun complains of it his complaint would injure no one but himself. His continuance in office would I am perfectly sure be fatal to the administration of Mr. Polk. As to the rest of the Cabinet I see no objection to their continuance if they [are] thought to be qualified. . . .